

Connections

February 2008

More Missouri Motorists **Arrive Alive** State Reaches Fatality Reduction Goal in 2007 - One Year Early

by Melissa Black and Sandy Hentges

For the second year in a row, Missouri has saved precious lives by reducing the number of traffic fatalities on our roads. As the new year rang in, fatalities in the Show Me State appeared to have decreased by about 11 percent, pulling Missouri to less than 1,000 traffic fatalities for the year and allowing the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety to reach this monumental goal one year early.

Fatalities from traffic crashes are down dramatically from 1,257 in 2005, to 1,096 in 2006, and finally 974 for 2007. Although the 2007 number will rise as additional reports come in, it is expected to stay under 1,000. Missouri hasn't had less than 1,000 traffic fatalities in a year since 1993 – 15 years ago. This is almost a 24 percent reduction in the last two years.

“If the number stays under 1,000 we have met the goal set by the Missouri Coalition for Roadway safety back in 2004 – and met it one year early,” said Colonel

James F. Keathley, superintendent of the Missouri State Highway Patrol. “We’d ultimately like that number to be zero, but we have to start somewhere and getting that number down to under 1,000 when it has been over that for the last five years is a tremendous accomplishment.”

The Missouri Coalition of Roadway Safety is a large group of safety advocates who banded together in 2004 to create Missouri’s Blueprint for Safer Roadways to attack the problem of traffic crashes and deaths. Within the Blueprint, eight essential strategies were set to reduce fatalities and Missouri’s fatality reduction goal was set at “1,000 or fewer fatalities by 2008.”

“Our efforts to improve the safety of Missourians have broken a 14-year trend, which is great news for Missouri families,” Gov. Blunt said. “I commend Colonel Keathley, the Highway Patrol, MoDOT, safety coalition partners and all those involved

for their work to ensure that Missouri families arrive at their destination safely.”

Besides increased enforcement and education, part of the reduction is attributed to MoDOT’s engineering advances like installation of median guard cable on the interstates, rumble stripes, smoother pave-

ment, better and brighter signing, striping and reflective markings.

“We are thrilled to know our work is saving lives,” said Director Pete Rahn. “Engineering improvements along with the combination of law enforcement,

continued on page 2



Cathy Morrison

Colonel James Keathley and Director Pete Rahn announced an 11 percent decrease in the number of traffic fatalities on Missouri roads in 2007 at a press conference at University of Missouri Hospital. Antoine Jones, left, gave a personal account of surviving an accident as a representative of ThinkFirst Missouri.

Charitable Campaign WOW!



Cathy Morrison

Gov. Matt Blunt congratulates MoDOT’s Charitable Campaign Coordinators Stacy Kaiser and Heather Arens and Director Pete Rahn on a successful campaign. MoDOT led all state agencies in giving donations, raising more than \$165,000 – the highest amount ever raised by a single state agency! Employee donations statewide totaled nearly \$1.12 million.

State of Transportation Address Coming Feb. 6

by Jeff Briggs

MoDOT Director Pete Rahn will present his annual State of Transportation Address to state legislators Feb. 6. The speech, given each year at the state Capitol to a joint session of the Missouri Senate and House of Representatives, gives an overview of the past year’s accomplishments for our agency, and a look forward to important transportation challenges ahead. MoDOT is the only state agency that receives this annual speech opportunity.

This year’s speech is expected to highlight MoDOT’s continuing road and bridge improvements as well as safety accomplishments. Most notably, Missouri has dramatically reduced highway fatalities over the past two years – a 24 percent decrease to bring the statewide total below 1,000 for the first time in 15 years.

“It’s a great privilege to address the state

legislature each year,” Rahn said. “We’ve accomplished so much this past year, and I’m really excited to share our successes at the Capitol.”

This is the fifth address since legislation was passed in 2003 authorizing the speech. It may also be the last, since the legislation required a speech for only five years. The requirement must be reauthorized for speeches to continue past this year.

Memorial Ideas

The deadline for submitting ideas for a memorial to fallen highway workers is April 7. Please send your ideas to Melissa Black or Sandy Hentges at the Central Office in Jefferson City or e-mail them to Melissa.Black@modot.mo.gov or Sandra.Hentges@modot.mo.gov.

Inside

8



Don’t Blink

District 3 takes a look at employee safety and health trends

10



Cover Up

Blankets warm concrete so contractor can finish the Jefferson City overpass

11



Command Performance

Coordinated teamwork helps keep traffic flowing in St. Louis

14

Winning Streak

District 9’s focus on safety translates to 19 months of no lost workdays

15



Watch Your Step

Preschoolers in District 10 learn about highway safety, signs and equipment

Fatality Dive

continued from page 1

educational efforts and emergency medical services have been proven to reduce fatalities. Strong partnerships made these improvements possible and saved lives.”

“We will continue to look for innovative ways to make our roads safer,” Rahn said.

Over the last four years, Interstate 70 cable installation reduced cross-median fatalities from 24 to two. Statewide, these fatalities were reduced by nearly half. Missouri currently has nearly 500 miles of median guard cable installed. MoDOT is studying the state’s entire four-lane divided highway system to determine other locations guard cable would be effective in reducing fatalities.

“We are very pleased that Missouri led the nation in the reduction of fatal traf-

fic crashes, and we are committed to working with our traffic safety partners to further reduce the number of traffic deaths in our state,” Keathley said.

The patrol and other local law enforcement agencies used innovative enforcement efforts and safety programs to help reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes in Missouri last year.

Although most of the “essential eight strategies” from the Blueprint are in progress, the Coalition continues to work toward the passage of a primary seat belt law in Missouri, which would save at least an additional 90 lives each year.

For more information about traffic safety efforts or a list of coalition partners, visit www.saveMOLives.com.

The “Essential Eight” are strategies the Blueprint lists that Missouri must implement to make significant progress in reducing fatalities. These were identified through extensive data analysis, current research findings and best practices.

Essential Eight Strategies and Their Status

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Pass a Primary Safety Belt Law and Maintain and Enhance Existing Safety Laws – NOT YET REACHED | 5. Expand, Improve and Maintain Roadway Visibility Features (i.e. markings, signs, lighting, etc.) – IN PROGRESS |
| 2. Increase Enforcement on Targeted Crash Corridors – IN PROGRESS | 6. Expand Installation of Median Three Strand Cable or Equivalent Barrier – IN PROGRESS |
| 3. Increase Public Education and Information on Traffic Safety Issues – IN PROGRESS | 7. Effectively Deter, Identify, Arrest and Adjudicate Alcohol and Other Drug Impaired Drivers and Pedestrians - IN PROGRESS |
| 4. Expand the Installation of Shoulder, Edgeline and Centerline Rumble Strips – IN PROGRESS | 8. Expand Installation and Maintenance of Roadway Shoulders and Clear Zones - IN PROGRESS |

Leap Year Brings Actual Birthdays for “Leaplings”

by Sally Oxenhandler

It happens every four years. We add a day to the calendar year to keep pace with the seasonal calendar. Otherwise, we might be applying sunscreen at Christmas rather than wrapping up.

This year happens to be a leap year. For leaplings, leapies or 29ers - those folks born on Feb. 29 - it means they’ll get to celebrate an actual birthday. Environmental and Historic Preservation Manager Gayle Unruh is an example. She’ll become a teenager on Feb. 29.

“I’ll have my thirteenth birthday this year,” Unruh said. “It will probably be a normal birthday.” That is, she said, unless her husband thinks up something really big (hint, hint).

Unruh said having a leap year birthday is kind of novel, but probably more of a conversation piece than anything else. Her nieces and nephews brag when they pass her up in age, and her husband has been accused of robbing the cradle.

“I get a year older anyway. I just don’t have that many birthdays. But mostly my life motors on,” Unruh said.

Information Systems Supervisor Randy Hutton’s son, Caleb, was born on Feb. 29, 1984. He and his wife actually picked that date because their son had to be delivered by Cesarean section.

“When Caleb was younger, he was a little mad we chose that date,” Hutton said. “But as he got older, he decided it was unique. I’m sure he’ll use it to his advantage one of these days.”

Hutton said they celebrate Caleb’s birthday on Feb. 28 when it’s not a leap year, as does Unruh. And both said having a leap year birthday has only caused minor inconveniences. For example, Unruh is unable to get her driver’s license on her actual birthday. She also decided only to save birthday cards she gets when her birthday falls on Feb. 29 because they seem a little extra special.

Unruh and Caleb Hutton aren’t totally unique. They are among an estimated four million people worldwide born in a leap year.

So when you think about moaning because another birthday is rolling around, remember: at least you get a birthday every year!

Five Things You Can Tell Your Neighbors About I-64/Route 40

by Marie Elliot

Missouri’s first design-build project, the New I-64, is well under way now. On Jan. 2, all lanes of Interstate 64/U.S. 40 between Ballas Road and Interstate 170 closed in both directions for the rest of the year. But that doesn’t mean you can’t still get around St. Louis.

So far commuters have done a fantastic job at adjusting their routes, which

- If you can, avoid traveling in St. Louis from 7-7:30 a.m. and 5-6 p.m. If you have a meeting in St. Louis, schedule it during off-peak hours or use phone or video conferencing options.
- Plan ahead. Check out Map My Trip and getaroundstl.com to plot your route around the construction or to residents and businesses near the construction zone.



In the forefront, Community Relations Managers Linda Wilson, left, and Marie Elliot work with the I-64 Incident Command Center team to help manage traffic flow.

has allowed traffic to flow remarkably well. But drivers traveling to St. Louis must remain vigilant and that starts with knowing what to do before you go. Below are five important things you can tell your neighbors about getting around the New I-64 Project in St. Louis:

- Use alternate routes, preferably interstates 70, 44 and 55 or, when possible, use alternate modes like the bus or MetroLink.

- You CAN easily get to downtown St. Louis. Just keep in mind that while you’re in the St. Louis area, you can call 511 to get around-the-clock, real-time traffic information. This five-mile stretch of highway will reopen Dec. 31, 2008. Then all lanes between I-170 and Kingshighway Blvd. will close for reconstruction for a year. I-64 will be completely open by January 2010.

Register Now!



The 98th Annual TEAM Conference is coming up soon. Register online now to attend the transportation engineer networking event on March 18-20 at the Adam’s Mark Hotel in St. Louis.

New for the 2008 conference is a featured speaker at Wednesday’s luncheon: Engineer-turned-comedian Don McMillan, and a Kids Safety Zone Program and field trip to the St. Louis City Museum.

There will also be several informative workshops and breakout sessions on

topics like communications, performance results, human resources, NEPA and more. You can also network with transportation partners in the exhibit hall and attend a technical tour to one of many interesting St. Louis-area sites.

The conference rate is \$125 now or \$150 if you register on site. Most tours and workshops are \$50 for a half day.

To register or get more information on tour options, breakout sessions, workshop topics and more, go to the Team Web site at www.modot.org/team.

Spotlight on Diversity

February is African American History month. This period of time is devoted annually to recognizing the contributions African Americans, both past and present, have made to our nation's history and culture. And because transportation is our business, this month's column will take a look at how our modern day transportation system has taken shape with the help of African American inventors from the past, as well as one of our own modern day transportation champions.

In the 1800s, Granville T. Woods worked as a fireman on the Danville and Southern Railroad in Missouri where he taught himself electrical and mechanical engineering. His self-taught expertise led to inventions like air brake features and electric transmissions that aided the development of railroads and helped power and safely stop street cars and subways.


Elijah McCoy's invention that automatically oiled working

Elijah McCoy

machinery became popular in industry and railroads in the early 1900s. When others tried to market similar devices, purchasers would demand his product instead, thus the coining of the phrase "the real McCoy."

Then, in 1923 Garrett A. Morgan patented the three-position traffic signal. The traffic management device greatly improved safety along America's streets and roadways once cars started becoming a more popular means of transportation and is viewed as the forerunner to modern-day Intelligent Transportation Systems.

Much more recently, in January 1998, Ollie W. Gates became the first African-American member of the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission – the very governing body that is responsible for planning for and maintaining Missouri's transportation system. He also became the first African-American to serve as the commission's chairman during his tenure.

To learn more about African American history in general, explore these Web sites: www.black-inventor.com, www.blackinventor.com or www.biography.com/blackhistory/index.jsp.

A Message from Commissioner Anderson



Team MoDOT:

On behalf of the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission, I want to congratulate the MoDOT employees who worked on and contributed to the 2008 Missouri State Employee Charitable Campaign. What a success!

Winston Churchill once said, "We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give." The lives of many Missouri families will be touched as a result of your selfless donations. I am proud of the way you showed just how much you care for others through this year's Charitable Campaign.

Through your generosity, MoDOT raised more than \$165,000 – the highest amount raised by a single state agency in the campaign's 23-year history. That is simply remarkable.

Thank you for making a difference. I am grateful for everything you do to make life better for all Missourians.

Sincerely,


Jim Anderson
Chairman

Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission

Mentoring Relationships Paint the Big Picture

Due to their long-time friendship and her respect for his leadership style, it was a natural choice for Organizational Performance Specialist Rebecca Geyer to choose Governmental Relations Director Jay Wunderlich as her mentor.

Like Brian Chandler, featured in a mentoring article in last month's issue, Rebecca has found it valuable to have a mentor from a different area in MoDOT. After all, she joined MoDOT's Mentoring Program more than two years ago with a desire to seek out another point of view from a successful

person. So far she has gotten that and a whole lot more.

To Rebecca, whose work is critical to the development of management strategies that will move the department forward, Jay paints the big picture of MoDOT.

"In an agency as big as MoDOT, it's hard to understand some of the initiatives that come out until you have someone else explain their value; someone who can help 'connect the dots,'" Rebecca said. "I can bounce ideas off of Jay and he gives me insight into how my work fits into the big picture at MoDOT."



Cathy Morrison

Jay Wunderlich and Rebecca Geyer make time to meet and work on their mentoring goals.

Tips for Finding a Mentor

1. Choose someone you respect and admire.
2. Look for a person who displays the type of leadership skills to which you aspire.
3. Look outside your comfort zone and expand your network.
4. Have more than one choice in mind so you have a backup if your first choice is unavailable.
5. Clarify expectations up front with your chosen mentor.

cepted. Now it's up to her to share some of the knowledge she has gleaned from working with Jay as she nurtures a new mentoring partnership with Chekesha Henderson, a relatively new transportation planner with great aspirations for her own career at MoDOT.

If you're interested in the Mentoring Program, contact the Equal Opportunity and Diversity Division at 573-526-5611, by e-mail at EqualOpportunity@modot.mo.gov or on the Intranet at www.wvi/intranet/eo/.

Dynamic Youth Web Site Launches

www.saveMOyouth.com

by Laura Holloway

Missouri youth have a fun, engaging resource to learn about traffic safety at www.saveMOyouth.com.

The Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety launched a sub site to the *Save-MOLives.com* Web site that is specific to youth and their interests as they prepare to travel and drive in Missouri.

The site is full of imagery, interactive videos, public service announcements,

driving facts and other materials meant to engage youth and encourage safe driving habits. Highlights include campaign materials for the Never Made It teen safety belt campaign, Battle of the Belt materials and information regarding Team Spirit.

Youth who wish to get involved in keeping their friends and family safe on the road may visit www.saveMOyouth.com for more details.



Be Good To Your Heart

February is American Hearth Month

by Sally Oxenhandler

It makes sense that the American Heart Association selected February – the month we celebrate Valentine’s Day – as the time to promote ways to prevent heart disease. Since 1963, Congress has required the president to proclaim February “American Heart Month” to urge Americans to join the battle against cardiovascular diseases - our nation’s No. 1 killer.

There are some pretty basic ways to work at keeping your heart healthy. We’ve heard them from the media, our doctors and the folks who care about us. But they’re worth repeating:

- Use up at least as many calories as you take in.
- Eat a variety of nutritious foods from all of the food groups.
- Eat less of the nutrient-poor foods.
- Don’t smoke tobacco and stay away from tobacco smoke.
- Maintain a healthy body weight.
- Exercise regularly by engaging in physical activities like walking, swimming, cycling, jogging, skiing or dancing.
- Keep your blood pressure and cholesterol under control.

The American Heart Association focuses on specific causes designed to help people achieve a heart-healthy lifestyle. Here is more information about each cause, including a web link for additional details:

Go Red for Women

Go Red For Women is the American Heart Association’s nationwide movement to help women band together to wipe out heart disease and stroke. <http://www.goredforwomen.com>.

Start!

Start! is the American Heart Association’s groundbreaking national movement that calls on all Americans and their employers to live healthier lives through walking. Promoting physical activity through workplace walking programs can help employees reduce their risk of heart disease and stroke. <http://www.americanheart.org/start>.

Alliance for a Healthier Generation

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation sets an aggressive goal to stop the nationwide increase in childhood obesity by 2010, targeting places that can make a difference in a child’s health:

Cardiovascular Disease Statistics and Information

- Cardiovascular disease, including stroke, is the No. 1 killer in America.
- Cardiovascular disease affects one in three adults, an estimated 80.7 million Americans, killing one American every 37 seconds (nearly 2,400 every single day).
- Estimated direct/indirect costs associated with cardiovascular disease in the United States in 2008 are \$448.5 billion.
- By 2010, the American Heart Association has set an aggressive goal to reduce coronary heart disease, stroke and the related risk by 25 percent.
- Since 1999, the American Heart Association’s efforts have contributed to a 23.1 percent reduction in the death rate from coronary heart disease and a 19.1 percent reduction in the death rate from stroke.
- Currently, the American Heart Association is funding 177 cardiovascular research projects worth \$80 million at research institutions across the Midwest.

homes, schools, restaurants, doctors’ offices and the community-at-large. <http://www.healthiergeneration.org>.

Power to End Stroke

The Power to End Stroke is an important initiative that focuses on three simple steps to protect against stroke: 1. Learn the risk factors; 2. Recognize the

warning signs; and 3. Respond by calling 911 immediately if you or someone you know is having warning signs of a stroke. <http://www.strokeassociation.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3030549>.

February Service Anniversaries

30 Years		
Ricky L. McMillen	D1	
Galen P. Moseley	D4	
Richard D. Huff	D5	
Mark S. Lyons	D6	
Jim D. Pruessner	D6	
Donald C. Schofield	D7	
Janet L. Cutbirth	D8	
Ronald J. Noland	D8	
25 Years		
Leslie E. Willard	D4	
David C. Feilner	D6	
Bernard W. Menke	D6	
Cloyd S. Miller	D6	
John L. Pritchett	D6	
Wade J. White	D9	
Oliver A. Heob	D10	
David T. Dodds	CO	
Michael E. Williams	CO	
20 Years		
Barbara A. Nyberg	D4	
Virginia L. Hunt	D6	

Y. Ross-Kleinschmidt	D6	
Lucy S. Smith	D6	
Ronald L. Cook	D9	
Jerry L. Spencer	D9	
Shelley K. Claypool	CO	
James E. Long	CO	
Vickie L. Moran	CO	
15 Years		
John N. Oehring	D5	
Jeremy L. Clark	D6	
Stephen P. Clark	D6	
Roger A. Matthews	D8	
Dennis W. Mitchell	D9	
Ronald D. Wilson	D10	
Joyce M. Eisterhold	CO	
Toni M. Prawl	CO	
10 Years		
Michael C. Mooney	D1	
Wesley C. Wallick	D1	
Steven H. Barteau	D2	
Charles E. Derboven	D2	
Warren R. Stalker	D4	

Roy S. Vogel	D4	
Christopher V. Weikel	D4	
Mark M. Wilde	D5	
Juanita J. Goins	D8	
Marlene O. Hale	D8	
5 Years		
Brian P. Pennock	D2	
Kandi R. Garner	D3	
Eugene C. Leverenz	D3	
Catherine M. Nelson	D4	
Rex G. Studt	D4	
Richard G. Turney	D4	
Randy A. Whyde	D4	
Terry D. Blankenship	D5	
David W. Kliethermes	D5	
Donald P. Armfield	D6	
Angela M. Fuerst	D6	
Deborah L. Gallagher	D6	
Patrick J. Keller	D6	
Casey L. Fairchild	D7	
Jennifer J. Hall	CO	
Mendy J. Sundermeyer	CO	

November Retirements

Name	Location	Years of Service
Harlan G. Adams	D10	23
Raymond L. Davis	D1	29
Douglas C. Burns	D4	33
George E. Ellett	D4	26
Richard L. Gillis	D4	8
Martin C. Poffenbaugh	D4	24
David A. Horton	D5	29
Rae Lynn Hearst	CO	13

In Memoriam

Active Employee		
Jeffery A. McBride	D6	Dec. 7
Retirees		
Delmar Dale Dotson	D8	Nov. 27
Patrick E. Ellis	D10	Dec. 1
Marvin J. Peterson	D4	Dec. 13
Billy H. Robertson	D9	Dec. 15
James E. Hancock	D4	Dec. 18
Diana M. Troutwine	D1	Dec. 18



Community Relations Office Reorganizes to Improve Service

by Sally Oxenhandler and Jeff Briggs

A recent reorganization of the Community Relations office is expected to improve turnaround time and customer service, according to its director, Shane Peck.

The first change came as a result of the cost-saving move to offer design plans electronically when MoDOT's Print Shop, which was housed under

made sense," Peck said. "While the print shop staff will still print plans as needed, they'll also be working to fulfill more of Central Office's general printing needs, much of which is generated by Community Relations."

Peck said the move would allow Community Relations to take a communica-



Print shop employees Loran Walton, Vickie Moran, Darrell Grothoff and Don Jones provide printing, color copying, scanning, reduction and enlargement and finishing services.

the Design Division, moved under the supervision of Community Relations on Dec. 1.

"Having the Print Shop become part of the Community Relations team just

tions product, such as a brochure, from start to finish.

"We can provide help with writing copy, designing the piece, providing photos



Multimedia Services Technician Olmedo Herrera, left, and Senior Multimedia Services Specialist Steve Bushko tape Community Relations Coordinator Sally Oxenhandler for a new segment of the department's Web cast, MoDOT Minute. A new show is taped every week in the Multimedia Services office and then it is aired on MoDOT's Web site and by some Missouri radio stations.

and ultimately publishing the end result," Peck said.

Don Jones has been with the Print Shop for 11 years, the past six as supervisor. His staff includes Darryl Grothoff, senior printing technician; Loran Walton, senior printing technician; and Vickie Moran, printing technician.

While oversight of the Central Office printing function has changed, the top-notch customer service delivered by the staff has not. Customers will continue to get the same accurate, timely and quality service as before.

In another change within Community Relations, the graphic design team has been consolidated and moved into the division's Multimedia Services unit. This will enable them to work more closely with photographers to produce the department's artwork, logos and other special products.

"We've got a great group of professionals in Community Relations," Peck

said. "These moves allow us to get a little more efficient in delivering our products and services."

In fact, those needing assistance with design will soon be able to make work requests for the graphic design team just as they do now for a photographer.

In the meantime, while Information Systems staff works to design the scheduling program, anyone needing graphic design services can contact Mark Baumgartner, Multimedia Services supervisor. Mark coordinates and assigns these requests just as he does for other multimedia services such as photography and video production.

For more information about the products and services provided by Community Relations, visit their newly redesigned Intranet page at wwwi/intranet/cr/.

Goodin Recognized for Efforts on New Safety Initiative

by DeAnne Rickabaugh

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration recognized Ben Goodin, MoDOT Motor Carrier enforcement administrator, with its Administrator's Award in November.

Ben was recognized for his participation with the administration's Comprehensive Safety Analysis 2010 Initiative. FMCSA, together with industry and state partners, is working on better ways to reduce commercial vehicle

crashes, fatalities and injuries. Using crash data, the CSA 2010 group has identified characteristics and behaviors of high-risk carriers and drivers. They are developing a range of interventions to correct risky behaviors before they become habits.

A field test of the model began last month in Georgia, Colorado, New Jersey and Missouri. After a 30-month testing period, the initiative fully implements in the United States in 2010.



Motor Carrier Enforcement Administrator Ben Goodin, left, receives accolades from FMCSA Administrator John H. Hill for his work on a new federal commercial vehicle safety initiative.

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D1

Northwest

The Passing of an Era

by Holly L. Murphy / photos by Kathy Null



Connie Hale’s retirement party in December brought people together from all over the state including several of the District Engineers she had worked with in her 22-year career. Connie (center) was thrilled to see Garry and Mary Chegwiddden, who drove in all the way from Jefferson City. Garry retired in 2001 from his position as State Construction and Materials Engineer.

The MoDOT Customer Service department was born in 1996. Each district set up customer service centers and hired customer service representatives to work directly with customers (a new idea for MoDOT). Connie Hale and Audrey Schroeder became the first two customer service representatives for the Northwest District. Because these were new positions, they learned along with the other customer service representatives around the state just what would be involved in this new and challenging job.

On Jan. 1, Connie Hale, one of the original Customer Service pioneers, retired after 22 years of service with the department. During this time Connie helped many types of customers, some nice, others . . . let’s just say not so nice. She saw many changes in customer service over the years and left with lots of memories of working at MoDOT. The blizzard of 1997 stands out

clearly in her mind when the phone rang almost non-stop for days and days!

Connie’s husband, Mike, retired in September. They have five children and six grandchildren. During retirement Connie plans to do some traveling and looks forward to having more time to spend with her family and her grand-kids. She still plans on working as a “1,000 hour” retiree for Community Relations for a little while longer (and we’re glad!)



Audrey Schroeder, who began Customer Service with Connie in 1996, flew in from Hudson, Colo. to celebrate the big event and share a few of the many embarrassing moments they suffered.

Operation Christmas Child

by Holly Murphy / photos by Shelly Aebersold

Shelly Aebersold, customer service representative, and Robin Shurtleff, credit union manager, traveled to Minnesota in December to assist with the Operation Christmas Child Mission, which is a part of Samaritan’s Purse, a program created by Evangelist Billy Graham’s son, Franklin Graham. The pair spent a day at the processing center, which is one of six centers in the United States. Churches, businesses

and schools around the United States promote the shoebox program and collect the boxes from their community members locally. People are encouraged to fill a shoebox with clothes, candy, small toys, toiletries, socks, etc. for children between the ages of two and 14. The boxes are sent to needy children all over the world. But, first the boxes must go through one of the processing centers and be packed in

crates for shipment. Each and every box must be opened by a volunteer to ensure the items included in it are acceptable. Approximately 700,000 boxes are processed at the Minnesota processing center from the third week of November to the second week of December. The centers are staffed largely with volunteers who sign up in early August to assist with this great cause. A large number of the volunteers are made up of youth groups. Shelly and Robin and another friend from their church spent one day at the center and they estimated about 50,000 boxes were processed and ready to be sent to children that day. Both Shelly and Robin said it was a great experience.



Customer Service Representative Shelly Aebersold (left) and Credit Union Manager Robin Shurtleff (right) volunteered their help.



More than 700,000 shoeboxes containing Christmas gifts for children all over the world are processed every year in this Minnesota warehouse.

for more info

Community Relations Manager Phone E-mail	Elaine Justus 816.387.2353 margaret.justus@modot.mo.gov
3602 N. Belt Highway St. Joseph, MO 64506-1399	



The St. Joseph Police Department wanted to recognize the city’s school crossing guards for all their hard work with a roller skating party in December. Arrive Alive T-shirts from the Blueprint for Safety Coalition were the hit of the party.

Officer Todd Smith

D2

North Central

Rollin' on the River

by Tammy Wallace

After several very intense months of hard work, the partial replacement of the Missouri River Bridge at Glasgow is becoming a reality. In January, the Highway Commission awarded a contract for \$14,381,799.60 to Jensen Construction Company to rehabilitate this historic river bridge.

The effort started last May, when resources for two major river bridges in the district became available

firm, was a partial replacement. The concept was to remove the existing decks and truss, leaving only the piers behind, and build a new wider plate girder bridge on the existing piers. This design would extend the life of the each bridge by 50-plus years. The cost of the partial replacement solution is little more than the cost of a more traditional bridge rehabilitation, and significantly less than building a completely new bridge. The one drawback with the plan



The Glasgow Bridge as it stands today.

through interstate and major bridge rehabilitation funding. The Historic Missouri River bridges at Glasgow and Miami, both in need of extensive repair, were suddenly on the radar screen. Glasgow would be the first in 2008 and Miami would follow in 2009.

Although this was great news for the district, to get the necessary work completed to let the Glasgow project, a very aggressive timeline would have to be followed, and some aspects that could normally take months to complete would have to be accomplished in weeks. Brian Haeffner, district design engineer, was project manager for Glasgow at the time, and coordinated the efforts between the bridge and environmental staff at Central Office and staff in the district.

Both bridges are narrow truss bridges and had vertical clearance issues as well. Built in 1922 and 1939, the aging structures constantly needed repair just to keep them open to traffic.

The innovative solution for these bridges, designed by HDR consulting

is that the bridges would need to be closed for a period of nine to 12 months.

While work began on the massive environmental issues associated with a major river bridge project, a public outreach campaign the likes of which had never been seen in the district ensued for the Glasgow bridge project. District Engineer Dan Niec and Brian and his team began meeting with federal, state and local officials, business owners and members of the community to discuss the new project, which received support from most everyone.

“Our area is fortunate to be receiving this type of investment. Those traveling for work, school, health care and other needs deserve a safe and sound route that is not prone to emergency closures like we had this spring,” said Sen. Bill Stouffer. “I know there will be challenges for our local communities during the year-long transition, but the benefits of having this improved structure for the next several decades will be a positive improvement for our area.”

Although the community was excited

about the new bridge, just like the team, they were of course concerned about how the bridge closure would affect their daily lives. Many local residents live on one side of the river and work

vertical clearance restrictions, and will last 50-plus years, which is a huge benefit to the surrounding communities and Missouri.

The contractor is currently preparing a



Public outreach meetings held in the community were well attended.

or shop on the other side. A great deal of effort has been put forth to research possible transportation alternatives such as a ferry service, and rail and vehicle shuttle services.

Because of the impact the closure will have on the community, the original contract placed for bid last September required the bridge to be under construction by January and reopened in nine months. Contractors felt the nine-month closure was too aggressive and the contract did not allow sufficient lead time for preparation, so no bids were received.

The team revamped the contract to revise the project time line and allow up to a 12-month closure. The contract provides significant incentives for early completion, and a disincentive for exceeding the 12-month closure. The contract was let again in December, when Jensen submitted the low bid.

Now that the project is moving forward, the team is continuing to seek alternate transportation solutions. Because the contract amount came in

work schedule that will include the date of closure and an estimate on when the bridge can re-open to traffic. The contractor can begin the bridge closure anytime after June 1 and can keep the bridge closed for a maximum of 365 days. The bridge must be reopened by Sept. 1, 2009 with a final project completion date of Dec. 31, 2009.

“I thank everyone on the team who has worked to get the Glasgow bridge under contract in such a short amount of time,” said Haeffner. “From all the environmental folks at central office, to the staff at the district, to the designers at HDR who put together the project plans, everyone has done a great job on this project.”

The team will keep the public informed on the progress through the Web site and the e-update system.

With Glasgow moving forward, it was time to begin focusing on the second bridge at Miami. “The Miami project will be nearly identical to Glasgow,” said project manager Preston Kramer. “The cost is a little more because of



An artist rendering of what the Glasgow Bridge will look like after the partial replacement. The overhead truss on the railroad bridge that runs parallel can be seen behind the new bridge.

over the estimated cost, which was \$13.9 million, there are no additional MoDOT funds available for alternate transportation. However, the team is continuing to pursue other funding alternatives with the community and other sources to provide some type of transportation service.

Although the bid amount was above the estimate, the team is pleased it can provide this needed improvement, and the citizens of Missouri are getting a good return on their investment. The new bridge will be wider, have no

the length of the bridge, but in most respects the process will be the same.”

With the Miami contract the district is making sure the two bridges will not be closed at the same time. Glasgow will be opened to traffic before the Miami bridge can be closed by the contractor.

When completed, these two projects will be a great benefit to north central Missouri and to our state's transportation system.

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D3

Northeast

2007 - A Good Year



Northeast Regional Planning Coordinator Nathan Walker, Congressman Hulshof Representative Scott Callicott, and Mike Scott, editor of *The Media* and *Edina Sentinel*, listen intently as a member of the audience asks a question.

Twenty-one legislators, media and planning partners participated in the first “Take it to the Limit in 2008” session last month to hear the good news about 2007 and what’s planned for 2008 in transportation.

After presentations by MoDOT staff, the audience presented questions and remarked on their appreciation for MoDOT’s work in northeast Missouri. Most notably, everyone is excited about the pending completion of the Avenue of the Saints and the Route 36 four-lane project. Two other similar events were held in January in Mexico and Warrenton.

Accomplishments

You’re driving on it! Six more miles of the Avenue DONE, and a celebration was held in August. The Route 107 bridge at Mark Twain Lake, Senator Bond Bridge near Hermann, the Moscow Mills interchange and a total of twenty-five construction projects were all completed in 2007.

Our partners. Cost share agreements were implemented with the cities of Troy and Warrenton and work partnerships were implemented with Shelby County, and the cities of Edina, Paris and Kahoka.

Signed, sealed and delivered! More than 60 miles of prep work for resurfacing was completed by our special crews. The maintenance crews sealed 400 miles of roads using either cinders, iron mountain chips or limestone chips to keep minor roads in good condition. Other crews painted or marked all 3,400 miles of road in the NE District and installed 10,177 signs.

Paving the way. More than \$15 million was spent resurfacing 109 miles of highway in northeast Missouri.

Savings. The NE District disposed of 44 pieces of large equipment for \$189,000, and traditional and online auction items brought in \$84,000. We collected 77 percent of property damages incurred - more than \$330,000. For FY07 (July ‘06 to June ‘07) we were 4.3 percent, or \$1,799,604 under programmed amount with our project awards, and for FY08, so far, (July ‘07 to November ‘07) we are 17.6 percent, or \$6,286,174 under programmed amount with our project awards.

Excellence in Practical Design. The Northeast District won two Excellence in Practical Design awards for Avenue of the Saints and the Spencer Creek Bridge replacement on Route 61 near Frankford.

Safety. We experienced zero lost-time incidents and lost time days and installed a 50 kw generator for emergencies.

10,000 area residents heard a MoDOT representative speak or saw MoDOT participating in local activities.

Route 36 - all 52 miles goes under construction!



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Going Green

With an increase in utility costs imminent and the reduction in transportation funding predicted, the Northeast District is working hard to continually improve its bottom line.

“One of the areas we should be able to see the biggest improvement is in our utilities,” said assistant district engineer Dave Silvester.

Employees are being reminded and encouraged to shut equipment off when not in use. For example, when leaving for a meeting, turn off the computer screen and lights. “A black computer screen takes less energy than a lit one,” Dave quotes from a reputable Web site. “A lot of these suggestions are simply common sense, we just need to be reminded.”

More significant reductions are expected after the installation of programmable thermostats in all of the maintenance buildings and motion detector lights in various locations, shutting off hot oil tanks and reducing the number of light bulbs used.



“The challenge to the district is to reduce utilities by 10 percent in one year,” Dave said.

When asked what they thought of this effort, employees were appreciative that management was encouraging “green” behavior. “This is a good idea,” said Bob Allen of the buildings and ground crew. “If we bring our home habits to work, we would be able to realize several ways to reduce our energy costs.” Rodney Osbourne, maintenance superintendent, sees as much opportunity out in the field. “It’s a good idea, and I’m glad we’re looking at this.” He said they’ve already identified several other ideas out in the rural areas that could help them.

Safety and Health Team Focuses Its Message

With zero lost time incidents, the Northeast District Safety and Health Team may not appear to need an agenda for 2008. Yet, even with a good record, there are plenty of safety and health issues that need to be addressed, which is why the team will focus its efforts in 2008 to develop a strategic plan based on safety and health trends among employees.

Since there are several statewide campaigns that share messages throughout the year, the Team decided to look at those areas in which awareness is not promoted at a statewide level.

“The team is trying to help our employees become more aware of different health issues that might be prevented so they can feel better

and live healthier,” said David Powell, Centralia maintenance crew member and one of the team members.

Slips, trips and falls seem to have the highest incidence in the district, with concern for preventive wellness running a close second. Other issues include poison ivy vaccinations, hosting a blood drive, smoking cessation, heart health and nutrition.



Jack Snelling participates in a free glaucoma screening.



The new “tractor plow,” an idea borrowed from the North Central District, has been a welcomed addition to the effort to fight winter weather. There are several advantages to equipping the tractors with a snow plow including easier visibility all around the vehicle and easier maneuverability, making snow removal quicker and more efficient in certain areas.

D4

Kansas City Area

Kansas City Scout Earns APWA Operations Program Excellence Award

by Gina Myles

The Kansas City Chapter of the American Public Works Association honored Kansas City Scout with the 2007 Operations Excellence Award for Scout's Travel Time Implementation Project. The award was presented to Gina Myles, Community Relations coordinator for Kansas City Scout, at the annual APWA Holiday Party held at the Argosy Casino on Dec. 17, 2007. The Operations Excellence Award recognizes outstanding public works operation programs that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of governmental operations and the quality of life for those who live and work within that community.

Kansas City Scout launched Travel Times, a key weapon in congestion management in January 2007. Travel Times represents the time it takes a driver, driving at current freeway speeds, to travel from one fixed point to another target. Scout's Travel Times are calculated using the vehicle detector station equipment in the roadway. Travel Time information

once calculated by the system is automatically posted and then updated continually on Scout's Dynamic Message Signs. If data cannot be retrieved by the system, no Travel Times are displayed on that particular DMS to ensure that no misinformation is given to the public.

"This award is truly a team effort and a testament to Scout's great operational team," says Scout Director Jason Sims. "Every department in Scout has to ensure that operations is the main focus so that Scout can provide the best information to the motorist as possible"

Kansas City Scout is a bi-state traffic management system that uses technology such as closed-circuit cameras, electronic message boards and sensors to monitor and manage traffic on more than 90 miles of local freeways. The Kansas and Missouri departments of Transportation launched the Scout system in 2004 and jointly maintain and operate it.



Gina Myles accepts the APWA Operations Program Excellence Award.



Gina Myles, Community Relations coordinator for Kansas City Scout, and Jason Sims, KC Scout director, display the 2007 APWA Award.

Fundraising Pays Off

by Kerri Lewis

End of the year festivities brought together food, fun and fundraising. Another spectacular effort made by District 4 employees raised more than \$1,500 to benefit the District 4 Employees Fund during the Second Annual Fall Harvest Chili Contest and the Annual Holiday Breakfast.

The District 4 Employees' Committee assisted in organizing the Second Annual Fall Harvest Chili Contest held at the Nashua Maintenance Building on Nov. 14 with the help of MoDOT employees from Nashua, Platte City, Dearborn, Northmoor, Riverside, Liberty, Chouteau, Excelsior Springs, Kearney and General Services. In

the midst of fall flowers and pumpkins, 90 people feasted on 22 crocks of chili, hot dogs, all the fixings and desserts.

The annual Holiday Breakfast kicked-off in early December. In all, 175 employees, retirees and guests attended the all-you-can-eat breakfast of pancakes, sausage and scrambled eggs prepared by Chris Cakes Inc. Attendees also enjoyed the opportunity to win raffle prizes, while helping out fellow employees through the District 4 Employees Fund. The District 4 Employees' Fund benefits MoDOT District 4 employees who find themselves in financial distress

due to events that are no fault of their own. Committee members are Sally Crump, Tammy Wimmer, Robin War-

ren, Debi Skaggs, Amy Gagne, Terri Houck-Shannon, Heather Barrows and Teresa Martin.



Judges taste 22 crocks of chili before deciding on the winners.

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D5

Central

Route 54 Overpass Finished in Less Than One Month

by Holly Dentner

Less than one month after construction started on the Jefferson Street Bridge over U.S. Route 54 in Jefferson City, the bridge was completed and opened to traffic on Jan. 3, ahead of schedule.

Reporters and local dignitaries gathered at the bridge on Jan. 3 as MoDOT Director Pete Rahn and District Engineer Roger Schwartz thanked the community for its patience during the accelerated work schedule. Route 54 was restricted to one lane in each direction during the construction and closed completely for two weekends to allow crews to work as needed.

Rahn expressed his appreciation for the MoDOT employees who worked tirelessly through the holiday season. He said he was proud of those employees

who initially responded to the emergency that damaged the bridge, the design personnel who quickly developed construction plans, and the construction and maintenance crews who worked each day, including weekends, until the work was finished.



Blankets and warmers were used on the bridge supports to help cure concrete in the freezing temperatures.

“We are very pleased with the quick action by MoDOT employees and the contractor to reconstruct this bridge so it could reopen as soon as possible,” said District Engineer Roger Schwartz. “Every step of the way, all measures were taken to ensure that the materials and processes were properly inspected and met MoDOT specifications and safety standards.”

The contractor for the project, Pace Construction Company of



Jefferson City Mayor John Landwehr thanks MoDOT for the fast work.



MoDOT construction inspectors watch as concrete is poured on the final portion of the Jefferson Bridge approach.

St. Louis also thanked the city for their generosity during the work. While they had to deal with an ice storm, snow and very cold weather, they appreciated the coffee and snacks from the Jefferson City Chamber of Commerce and even a pizza delivery one evening after Dominos found themselves with a cancelled order.

The Jefferson Street overpass was closed Nov. 27, after a tanker truck crashed near it on Route 54. The explosion and fire from the tanker caused

significant damage to the structure, and inspectors determined that the bridge could deteriorate quickly and needed to be replaced.

Pace Construction submitted the low bid of \$878,000. Other materials contracts were also awarded for the work, bringing the total amount for all contracts to \$1,260,446. MoDOT furnished pilings for the bridge and improved pedestrian access by including a six-foot-wide sidewalk to replace the old bridge’s four-foot sidewalk.

The District Trig Gig



Resident Engineer Chuck Sullivan teaches trigonometry to students from District 5 and Central Office. The class meets twice a week through the end of March. Successfully completing the course allows employees the potential to qualify for promotions within the department.

81 Years of Service for Recent Retirees

by Holly Dentner

The following district employees have dealt with their last snowfight and are moving on to the retirement life. We’ll miss them and thank them for their hard work as part of the MoDOT team.



Regional Maintenance Supervisor Henry Hentges retired on Jan. 1 after 34 years with the district. Hentges spent all but one

of those years on the district’s special concrete crew. His first year at MoDOT was on the Central Office bridge crew, but then he switched over to the district’s concrete crew and worked as a maintenance worker and senior maintenance worker before becoming the crew supervisor in 1991.

Henry is looking forward to tackling his wife’s extensive “honey-do” list now that he’s retired, and spending lots of time woodworking, hunting and fishing. He calls his coworkers his MoDOT

family and said he will always appreciate their hard work and dedication.



Jan. 1 was also the last day for Sharon Claspill, senior maintenance worker at the Camdenton maintenance building. Sharon

started at MoDOT 18 years ago as a crew worker and intermediate crew worker. Her entire tenure at MoDOT has been at the Camdenton building.

Sharon has no definite plans for her retirement, other than spending lots of time with her family, including her seven grandchildren. She says she’ll miss the day-to-day interaction with her coworkers and all the people she’s met at MoDOT.

David “Red” Horton retired Dec. 1 after 29 years at MoDOT. Red was the regional maintenance supervisor at the Eldon



maintenance building. He has also held the positions of maintenance worker, senior maintenance worker, maintenance specialist and local maintenance supervisor while at MoDOT and has worked at the Tuscumbia, Highpoint and Eldon buildings.

Red claims he didn’t mind working in the hot or cold weather, as long as the temperature wasn’t too extreme in either direction. He’ll miss his coworkers, but plans to “do whatever he wants” in his retirement.

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D6

St. Louis Area

I-64 Teams Keep Traffic Flowing

by Linda Wilson and Andrew Gates

MoDOT and St. Louis County have joined forces to create the Interstate 64 Traffic Response Team. The team will patrol non-interstate roads adjacent to the I-64 reconstruction project to address traffic problems and motorist issues and keep traffic moving. St. Louis County received federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Funds to pay for the project, which is operated by MoDOT on their behalf.



Crews remove the McKnight bridge looking eastbound on I-64.

The team will cover four zones in St. Louis County from 5 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. on weekends. The boundaries of the service area are Route 141 on the west, the city/county boundary on the east, Interstate 70 on the north and Route 30 (Gravois Road) on the south.

The I-64 Traffic Response Team is patterned after MoDOT's Motorist Assist program that has been running on the region's interstates since 1993. The team assists motorists with minor breakdowns, handles traffic control at crashes and other incident scenes with local police and continuously looks for ways to keep traffic moving on the roads most congested by the I-64 detour. Motorist Assist operators continue helping interstate drivers.



The green line on this St. Louis metropolitan area map shows the New I-64 project location.



The I-64 Incident Command Center

One of the key concerns during District 6's preparations for reconstructing I-64 was managing the traffic displaced during the interstate's closure. To prepare, engineers spent time synchronizing traffic signals, completing construction projects and restriping work. Despite extensive planning, there was still a chance that traffic would remain extraordinarily congested while commuters adjusted their traffic patterns after the closure. To manage traffic flow through the first two weeks of the closure, the district established an incident command center.

"We wanted to make sure that we planned for every possible situation," said Ed Hassinger, District 6 Engineer. "We brought together a group of experts to manage the minute-to-minute traffic flow on freeways and arterial routes."

The center was filled with experts on freeways, state and county arterial flow, law enforcement, mass transit and the local municipalities who worked side by side to keep traffic moving throughout the district. The efforts of that paid off, as traffic continued to flow smoothly around the region. Congestion levels on major roadways remained equivalent to traffic flow before the closure.

"Dealing with a significant event such as an interstate closure required a very collaborative effort," Hassinger said. "Our success in the weeks after the closure demonstrated the value of coordinating efforts between all the transportation resources in the region. We could not have successfully closed I-64 without the efforts of our partners in the municipalities, the county, St. Louis and the law enforcement community."

Construction Plan

Construction of the Interstate 64 project began in March 2007 and will be complete by July 31, 2010. During the first year, progress has been made at a rapid pace at Kingshighway, Interstate 170 and four bridges in between. The project is on schedule and within budget. To stay informed on the schedule, visit www.thenewi64.org and click on Construction Zone. Below is an overview of the construction plan. Exact construction dates are announced one to two weeks in advance.

2007

- One lane each direction closed on I-170.
- New ramp from westbound I-64 to northbound I-170 opened October 2007.
- New ramp from southbound I-170 to eastbound I-64 to open Jan. 2, 2008.
- Westbound entrance ramps closed at Hanley Road.
- One lane each direction closed on Kingshighway.
- Half of Kingshighway complete in December 2007.
- Tamm, Bellevue, Highland and Bolland bridges closed for reconstruction.
- Tamm opened October 2007.

2008

- I-64 closed from Ballas Road to I-170 on Jan. 2.
- I-64 bridges over Lindbergh, Clayton/Warson and Brentwood removed.
- Lindbergh, Clayton/Warson and Brentwood closed on removal weekends.
- Bellevue, Highland and Bolland bridges open.
- Spoeede and McKnight closed for six months.
- Kingshighway complete in late summer.
- Hampton interchange closes in early fall and reopens late spring 2009.
- McCutcheon bridge closed for six months.
- I-64 reopens from Ballas Road to I-170 by Dec. 31, 2008.

2009

- I-64 closed from I-170 to Kingshighway in January
- Hanley, Big Bend, Clayton, and Oakland closed.
- Laclede Station, Claytonia Terrace and McCausland will have temporary closures for I-64 bridge work.
- Hampton bridge opens late spring 2009.
- I-64 reopens from I-170 to Kingshighway by Dec. 31, 2009.

2010

- All lanes of I-64 and I-170 open.
- Work continues off the interstate on any remaining activities until July 31, 2010.



An excavator loads concrete into a crusher to become the roadbed for the new I-64. More than 40,000 tons of material was removed in January.

D6 Welcomes Shirlyn Myles

by Kara Price

Shirlyn Myles recently joined MoDOT as the community liaison for the St. Louis metropolitan area. She has more than seven years experience in advertising and marketing communications, including working in the Community Relations Department at St. Louis Community College and special events and marketing coordinator at Annie Malone Children and Family Service Center.



Shirlyn has embarked upon her newest challenge at MoDOT in January as the liaison for the district through active involvement with local groups and organizations. She will provide assistance regarding employment, procurement and other department programs, activities and initiatives. Her daily tasks include coordinating community outreach; advocating for department efforts in equal opportunity and affirmative action; conducting program development activities regarding recruitment, training and workshops; and on-job training.

"I am a native of St. Louis, and I strongly believe in our department's goal to serve our community and definitely improve it," said Myles. "I am very excited about joining MoDOT's team and to do what I can to get MoDOT's messages out to the community."

Shirlyn earned her bachelor of arts degree in advertising and marketing communications and her master's degree in media communications from Webster University.

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D7

Southwest

2007: A Year of Achievements

by Becky Baltz

Last year was a year full of progress and achievements for both the department and the district. Listed below is the progress report.

MoDOT

Missouri led the nation in saving lives last year, down by 127 compared to 2006. As of Dec. 31, 2007 we had 947 fatalities in Missouri – an 11 percent decrease from last year. In District 7 we had 45 fewer fatalities than in 2006.

MoDOT went from 47 percent of our major roads in good condition in 2005 to 74 percent in 2006.

We went from the third worst pavement in the nation on major roads to the ninth best.

\$5.7 billion program delivered within 0.013 percent of the estimates over six years.

Customer satisfaction with MoDOT is at 79 percent.

MoDOT won the Missouri Quality Award.

We shared a lot of information about the life-saving effects of safety belts.

We partnered with agencies we hadn't worked with in the past to encourage support for a primary seat belt law.

The helmet law was not repealed.

District 7

We beat the storms at both the beginning and end of 2007. The storms didn't beat us, however, I think they had us down a couple of times. Everyone who lost power has a renewed appreciation for electricity. We helped travelers get to their destinations safely in the worst of conditions!

Butler Senior Maintenance Worker Shawn McVey's leukemia remains in remission and he's back to work.

District 7 won the chip seal contest.

Performance Plus was expanded to Design and Maintenance.

Rudy Farber became the first Highways and Transportation Commissioner from Newton County.

Equipment Specialist John Pratt and his son learned a lot more than planned on "Bring Your Child to Work Day." They were involved in an accident and

fortunately both were fine. The "both were fine" is the good part!

Employee Advisory Council computers were put in each maintenance building.

We discovered a huge sinkhole under Jasper County Route TT (maybe more interesting than good).



This sink hole opened up this summer near Missouri Southern State University in Joplin.

We finished four-laning McDonald County Route 71.

Maintenance Supervisor Derik Campbell volunteered to fight in Iraq.

Permanent Message Boards were installed on Interstate 44.

Mt. Vernon employees Dennis Roethemeier and Danny Bowling won the District ROADEO. Dennis came in third statewide.

District 7 won the I-44 Charitable Campaign contest.

I've learned Jim Tallman on the Survey party is one of the strongest people I know as he battles cancer.

The Range Line and 20th project was completed in Jasper County.

The I-44 Welcome Center opened. It's a great facility!

We learned MoDOT employees are more satisfied

with their jobs than they were two years ago.

The governor ordered us to take Christmas Eve off, and the weather actually cooperated!

We're looking forward to a great year in 2008!

Tool and Equipment Challenge Winners Announced

by Wendy Brunner-Lewis

The District 7 Tool and Equipment Challenge committee received nearly a dozen entries for the 2007 Challenge. Choosing only one winner for each category was extremely difficult because District 7 has some very creative and ingenious employees!

The winners are:

- Sheldon Maintenance employees with their dump-truck shovel rack (fleet innovation),
- Nevada building employees for their aluminum bridge number plate (non-fleet innovation). This plate has the bridge number cut into it, and it's mounted to the bridge with hammer-set nail-drive anchors.
- Ron Combs, regional Maintenance supervisor, for his bridge maintenance applicator (hand-tool innovation).



Ron Combs' idea reduces the number of employees on the bridge.

This machine applies linseed oil, Star Macro and Pavon Indeck to bridge decks and parapets.

The winners receive a trophy and lunch, and compete for statewide

honors at the March Innovation Challenge Showcase in Sedalia. Each of the first-place winners earn their district an additional \$10,000 for the maintenance budget. Individuals are eligible for a maximum of \$500 per person or \$2,000 per team.

All other entries will be sent to Solutions at Work, an employee-recognition

program designed to collect, evaluate, document and communicate best practices that are delivering improved results within MoDOT.

Congratulations to our winners, and thanks to everyone who submitted their ideas!



Sheldon Maintenance devised a dump-truck shovel rack.

Nevada Maintenance's winning idea was a bridge number plate.

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D8

Springfield Area

D8 Safety Coalition Helps Reduce Roadway Fatalities

by Bob Edwards

Driving safety in District 8 improved significantly in 2007 over 2006 with a 37 percent drop in fatalities. That follows a smaller drop in 2006 from 2005.

The reductions are seen as a culmination of three years' worth of roadway upgrades, including installing Interstate 44 median guard cable; more targeted law enforcement; more consistent and focused highway safety education; and quicker emergency response.

The effort has been coordinated by the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety, with a very active group in District 8.

"The one thing that's missing is a primary seat belt law," said District Traffic Engineer Joe Rickman. If such legislation were approved, he said, an estimated 90 lives a year statewide could be saved.



Bob Edwards

Conway Maintenance Supervisor Jeff Robertson, working near Marshfield, repairs and tensions I-44 median guard cable.

Highway fatalities in Missouri unofficially totaled 974 in 2007, down from 1,096 in 2006. (See complete report on page 1.) In District 8's 12 counties, traffic deaths totaled 87 in 2007; 137 in 2006; 150 in 2005.

I-44 cross-median crashes in Greene, Webster and Laclede counties resulted in 11 fatalities in 2005. That number dropped to five fatalities in 2006 when the cable was being installed and only one fatality in 2007 (when a vehicle flipped over the cable).

Transportation Project Manager Don Saiko, who put together the I-44 median guard cable project for District 8, said the high-tension, socketed cable system is functioning as designed – and better than expected in many cases.

"Even though it is not meant to stop tractor-trailers, it has stopped or slowed down several, which in turn has probably prevented some serious or even fatal crashes," Saiko said.

Safety coalition member Pam Holt, RN, trauma prevention education coordinator with St. John's Hospital in Springfield, cited the importance of ongoing safe-driving educational campaigns.

The effort includes a St. John's-Coalition partnership to produce a "Drive Smart" DVD. The DVD mixes solid information with humor and contains a segment on the "Top 10" irritating driving behaviors, a driver's test preparation quiz and an interactive "game show" to teach driving lessons.



Bob Edwards



Doug Durham

D8 at Work

Senior Signal and Lighting Electrician Pat Turner (top photo) repairs signal heads along Chestnut Expressway (Business Loop 44) in Springfield following Jan. 7-8 tornadoes and severe thunderstorms.

Senior Construction Inspector Brett Foster (middle photo) talks with area residents during a Jan. 3 public informational meeting on the Route 60/Glenstone Avenue (Business 65) project in Springfield.

Signing Crew Maintenance Crew Leader Doug Foley (bottom photo) repairs a snowplow at Springfield Maintenance.

13

Mechanic, Signal Veterans Retire

by Angela Eden

Bolivar Area Field Mechanic Leonard Miller

Service: 35 years (Hired April 1, 1972)

Career: Maintenance worker, Wheatland, 1972; mechanic helper, Buffalo area, 1988; shop mechanic, District Garage, 1992; field mechanic, Bolivar area, 1994

Memorable Work: Devising a brush grapple to help pick up debris after the 2007 ice storm. It cost \$4,000 compared to a \$30,000 commercial grapple.

Biggest Change: Computerized equipment in the field, office computers

Quote: "I enjoyed designing and building inventions."

Post-MoDOT Plans: Work in his shop

at home restoring old cars and Farmall tractors; part-time job

Signal Shop Senior Signal and Lighting Electrician Bob Barnes

Service: 23-1/2 years (Hired Aug. 1, 1974)

Career: Senior crew worker, 1984; signal and lighting electrician 1985; senior signal and lighting electrician 2004 – all on the Signal Crew

Memorable Work: Installing cameras at the Route 60/Route C/K intersection at Seymour to detect Amish buggies waiting at the signal

Biggest Change: Reduction from 30



Barnes



Miller

types to seven types of traffic signal controllers through standardization; using a centralized computer system to troubleshoot signal problems

Quote: "I hope my employment made a difference. I hope it helped somebody, some place."

Post-MoDOT Plans: Rehabilitating from knee surgery; motorcycle riding; restoring a 1936 Ford; working his family's farm near Columbia

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District 9 Ends 2007 with No Lost Workdays

The South Central District ended 2007 on an up note with no lost workdays for the entire calendar year, a streak that also included seven months of 2006, making the total 19 months. District Safety and Health Manager Darren Petrus said this was a total team effort with several contributing factors.

“I believe our district’s approach to making safety a clear priority has made all the difference,” Petrus said. “This is a reflection of the statewide cultural change. We always knew what changes could help us achieve this level but finding the support all the way up to the department director and the accountability associated with Tracker has given us the foundation we needed to make it happen.”

He described how the focus on safety has been in place long enough that as new supervisors and managers are promoted, they have a well-rooted appreciation for the importance of safety and are effective in driving it home with employees. In addition, experienced supervisors have seen the benefits of keeping employees safer and have embraced the concept as well. Evidence of this can be seen in how safety is a standing agenda item for management team, superintendent, resident engineer, maintenance and department meetings.

Maintenance Superintendent Steve Mayberry said no shortcuts are condoned when it comes to safety. “Crews

do not feel they are pressured into doing something unsafe just to get production and this message is reinforced almost daily,” he said. “In the event that we do have an accident, we study the cause, make recommendations on what can be done to eliminate this in the future and implement a plan to address the issue. I believe our success comes down to a culmination of leadership, attitude and teamwork.”

According to Rolla Maintenance Crew Leader Tyann Alexander, communication and teamwork are instrumental in continued safety strides. “Our district has one of the best lines of open communication, which involves all employees,” she said. “We have stressed the importance of safety in our workplace and, if an unintentional accident were to occur, our district works with our employees. Our district displays the true meaning of teamwork.”

Petrus said some of the programs District 9 has in place have undoubtedly contributed to the streak. “The

Work SIMS pre-employment physical program has helped us hire better physically-qualified employees by determining which candidates have the ability to meet demands of certain positions,” he said.

In addition, through the temporary modified duty program, every effort is made to find work that fits the medical restrictions of injured employees so they can continue to contribute to departmental progress rather than be off work for an extended period of time. “Employees are well aware of this program and are supportive of our efforts to find meaningful work for them while they recover,” Petrus said. “This ben-

efits the employee as well as MoDOT.” Petrus indicated a focus on training also supports the success. “We are better preparing our employees for the work they will be performing,” he said. “We recognize the importance of quickly bringing new hires on board and helping all employees understand that safety will not be sacrificed for productivity.”

Petrus said resting on this success is not an option. To maintain what has been achieved, the district must consider it an ongoing pursuit and take steps such as expanding training programs and continuing to work with new employees as they come on board.



Delta Force Established to Achieve Uninterrupted Traffic Flow

14 A combination of the January 2007 ice storm, the tangible result of creating uninterrupted traffic flow and focusing MoDOT resources on major routes has prompted the creation of a special snow plowing team known as the South Central District Delta Force. This team, consisting of six employees and plow-equipped trucks from the central part of the district (Salem, Bunker, Success, Steelville and Potosi), has the purpose of supplementing existing forces on major routes, particularly Interstate 44, during winter storm events.

“Clearing Interstate 44 as soon after a storm hits as possible is critical,” said South Central District Maintenance Engineer Henry Haggard. “With 36 percent of all jobs in Missouri located

within three miles to either side of interstates 44 and 70, it’s easy to see why this would be a priority.”

According to Haggard, the Delta Force is not intended to replace or relieve

existing forces, but rather support them in clearing the highest priority routes in the district. “Existing crews and equipment will be used to treat the interstate and, if it appears additional resources are needed to get the job done, the Delta Force will be called in to work alongside,” he said. “This was a more feasible solution than permanently moving trucks and personnel to the interstate buildings, plus having them in the central part of the district keeps them in a position to support the other major routes if a storm should hit on 60, 63 or 8.”

Following are the standard operating procedures for the Delta Force:

- Designed for response to winter weather conditions including: snow accumulation of two or more inches, sleet and freezing rain
- Interstate superintendents request deployment of the Delta Force

through the maintenance engineer, who dispatches them – under predictable conditions, requests should be made in advance

■ Operators report to the designated contact person in the assigned area and are given instructions – three assignment areas are Pulaski, Phelps and Crawford counties

■ Operators are required to work up to 10 hours on I-44 before returning to base

“After the severe winter storms last year, we realized more resources had to be dedicated to clearing the interstate of snow and ice,” Haggard said. “We believe this will effectively get us to our goal of restoring traffic flow on Interstate 44, the lifeline of southern Missouri.”

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D10

Southeast

Ribbon Cutting Commemorates Early Completion of Cape Girardeau County Project

by Belinda McMurry

Partnership and teamwork. These are two words that have much to do with the early completion of the Interstate 55/East Main St./LaSalle Ave. interchange in Cape Girardeau County. From the partnership of Southeast Missouri State University with the cities of Cape Girardeau and Jackson, to the teamwork with the legislature, MoDOT and the Dumey Contracting crew, many individuals were on hand Dec. 17 to help commemorate the new interchange.

“This is a project that exemplifies how positive results emerge when organizations work together,” said MoDOT Project Manager Andy Meyer. “This project was expected to be complete in the summer of 2008, but due to great teamwork, the project was completed this winter.”

With snow still on the ground, the large crowd benefited from a heated tent, set at the interchange site on East Main St. in Jackson. The \$8,162,125 contract was awarded to Dumey Contracting, Inc., last year with an expected completion time of summer 2008. Even with winter weather delays, the project was completed ahead of schedule by approximately six months.

The project included grading, paving and bridge construction for the new interchange located about two and a half miles north of the Route 34/61 interchange with I-55 (Center Junction Exit 99).

The new interchange now connects East Main St. in Jackson to I-55. This summer, Cape Girardeau anticipates beginning construction of LaSalle Ave. from I-55 to Route W.



Southeast District Engineer Mark Shelton, left, welcomes the public and dignitaries to the I-55/East Main St./LaSalle Ave. interchange ribbon-cutting ceremony. Due to cold weather, the ceremony was held in a large tent at the East Main St. interchange site in Jackson.



Area dignitaries cut the ribbon during the I-55/East Main St./LaSalle Ave. interchange ribbon-cutting ceremony Dec. 17.

Preschoolers Discover MoDOT

MoDOT employees recently held an educational event at a local preschool. Students, right, learned about road signs and highway safety.



Preschoolers were able to view the inside of a MoDOT dump truck and learn more about workzone and highway safety.

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John L. Oliver, Jr. Parkway Dedication Ceremony Held

by Belinda McMurry

A dedication ceremony for the John L. Oliver, Jr. Parkway was held Dec. 16 at the Glenn Convocation Center on the Southeast Missouri State University River Campus in Cape Girardeau.

Prior to his death in 2005, Oliver was a prominent attorney in Cape Girardeau and a fourth-generation practitioner from one of Missouri's most distinguished legal families. Oliver was also nominated to the Missouri Highways

and Transportation Commission in 1989 by Gov. John Ashcroft.

Sen. Jason Crowell sponsored the legislation, naming a section of new Route 74 from the Missouri/Illinois state line to the intersection of Kingshighway in Cape Girardeau in honor of Oliver.

Along with the Oliver family, Crowell and Cape Girardeau Mayor Jay Knudtson participated in the ceremony.



Mrs. John L. Oliver, Jr., along with Sen. Jason Crowell and Cape Girardeau Mayor Jay Knudtson unveil the John L. Oliver, Jr. Parkway sign during a dedication ceremony Dec. 16.

Connections

The mission of *Connections* is to be a monthly source of Missouri Department of Transportation news and feature articles that connect employees statewide. It is distributed to MoDOT employees and retirees.

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Knowledge is Power

by Megan Mills

Motorists now have 48 new dynamic (permanent) message signs to provide traffic information and help reduce congestion on heavily traveled sections of interstates 70 and 44. Besides helping motorists avoid delays and get to their destination safely with timely traffic information, these signs also feature Amber Alert messages, which are helpful in recovering missing children. The signs are part of MoDOT's new Driving Edge initiative, an umbrella program that provides highway information before you travel, along the way and around the clock.

"Adding these boards has helped give drivers power to make better decisions and to be better informed," said Troy Pinkerton, MoDOT traffic liaison engineer. "The information on these signs can put the driver in control of their trip – they can take an alternate route and avoid possible problems or call ahead to let someone know their revised arrival time if they know the length of the delay."

The new signs replace the districts' portable changeable message signs that were used on I-70 and I-44 work zone projects. Those signs are now being used in other areas.

The signs display up to three lines, 18 characters each, of information. The signs' messages are kept updated so the public will get important information quicker.

"These signs are an important tool to help us manage traffic and keep the roads as safe as possible," Pinkerton said. "The more motorists know about what's going on, the better off we all are."

A grant from the Federal Highway Administration's Amber Plan Implementation Assistance Program helped fund the installation of these signs. MoDOT received a \$400,000 grant from the program and provided \$100,000 in matching funds.

Statewide guidelines have been established for operation of the signs. The document strives to maintain consistency in messaging on these recently constructed signs. In addition to providing direction on responsibility, priority and verification, the various types of message formats to be displayed are also addressed. MoDOT has also developed a partnering agreement with the Missouri State Highway Patrol for how they can get information to travelers as they respond to incidents prior to MoDOT.

The department also is working to deploy signs in District 1 and District 10 for the upcoming construction season.

The Dynamic Message Boards Can Display

- Advanced notice for scheduled incidents
- Work zone information
- Amber Alert messages- information about child abductions
- Emergency information- evacuations or state, military or local law enforcement closures

- Hazardous or uncommon road conditions
- Travel times, alternate routes in the event of a delay, congestion
- Other public information that requires motorists to alter their travel plans

Electronic Message Boards Message List - December 2007

Standard Rotating Messages

Travel info, 888-ASK-MODOT
Road conditions, 888-ASK-MODOT
Work zone info, www.modot.org
Drive Smart, www.modot.org
Buckle Up, www.savemolives.com
Speed limit enforced
Travel info, www.modot.org
Buckle Up, Arrive Alive
Road conditions, www.modot.org
Watch your speed
Seatbelts save lives
Work zone info, 888-ASK-MODOT
Buckle up kids, use car seats
No MOre Trash! www.nomoretrash.org

Adopt-A-Highway, www.modot.org
Car seats save kids
To report emergencies dial *55

New additions to the standard rotating messages, when appropriate:

Wet pavement, slow down
Headlights on when wipers are on
Buckle up. It's the law.
Move over for stopped emergency vehicles

Specialty messages

Click it or ticket
Ice and snow, take it slow
You drink & drive. You lose.
Pickups rock. They also roll. Buckle up.
Don't pass snowplows
Give snowplows room to work
Move over or slow down for stopped emergency vehicles

National Amber Alert Awareness Day



National Amber Alert Awareness Day was Jan. 13. To promote the importance of spreading the word about child abduction cases, several of MoDOT's electronic message boards carried messages promoting the event. MoDOT uses its 48 permanent electronic message boards along interstates 70 and 44, as well as Gateway Guide and Kansas City Scout, to post Amber Alerts. MoDOT also has a link to the Amber Alert portal on its home page, www.modot.org.

Cathy Morrison